



The President's Daily Brief

August 25, 1975

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PORTUGAL

President Costa Gomes last night disavowed two presidential communiques issued earlier yesterday that had made it appear he was backing Prime Minister Goncalves. Whatever the reason for the reversal, it would seem that the anti-communist group in the military will now be even more insistent in its demands for Goncalves' removal.

Both communiques were released by the Communist-dominated propaganda service in the Armed Forces General Staff. They could have been issued without the President's authorization in an attempt by the Communists to provide momentum for a last-ditch effort to scuttle the efforts of the anti-communist group and save Goncalves.

We cannot exclude the possibility, however, that Costa Gomes authorized the communiques in an effort to aggravate divisions in the anti-communist camp. If so, it would seem that the scheme has backfired.

The communiques, broadcast by the official state radio and television stations before they were retracted, reported decisions supposedly reached earlier at a meeting of the ruling three-man directorate and other key military figures. They asserted that the Goncalves government must continue in power, that the political program supported by the anti-communist group led by Major Antunes is unacceptable, and that firm action would be taken against those instigating anti-communist incidents throughout the country.

Over the weekend, Army Chief of Staff Fabiao--who has been selected by the anti-communist group to replace Goncalves--issued an outspoken communique of his own, which sounded very much like a bid to rally public support for the move against Goncalves. Fabiao, in an indirect criticism of the Prime Minister, said it is wrong to label those who criticize the revolution as reactionaries. He said the time has now come to correct the mistakes of the revolution.

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PORTUGUESE TIMOR

President Suharto continues to hold in abeyance plans for military intervention in Timor pending the outcome of discussions with Lisbon aimed at obtaining approval for Indonesia's stepping in to restore order in the territory. Should the situation reach chaotic proportions in the meantime [redacted] Suharto [redacted] will not wait.

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[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] Lisbon has asked Indonesia only for assistance in evacuating refugees from Timor.

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Over 1,100 refugees, apparently including many Portuguese military, were evacuated by a Norwegian freighter over the weekend. Indonesia has a naval vessel standing by to evacuate the staff of its own and the Nationalist Chinese consulates. Jakarta is hesitant to send the ship into Timorese waters, however, fearing that its appearance might be misunderstood in Lisbon.

Anticipating the possibility of intervention without Portugal's express approval, [redacted]

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Jakarta's concern that conditions there may pose a security threat to Indonesia. [redacted]

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[redacted] Indonesia has no territorial ambitions but only wants a smooth decolonization of Portuguese Timor.

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NOTES

The mass rally during the weekend in Vientiane celebrating the communist take-over of the Laotian capital involved little anti-US rhetoric and no anti-US demonstrations.

The designation of a communist administration in the capital brings to an end, for all practical purposes, joint administration of Laos. Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma reportedly has become a target of criticism because he has not vigorously backed communist policies and programs. We have no evidence that the communists intend to remove Souvanna, but his position, along with those of other noncommunist officials who remain in office, may be in jeopardy unless he offers more active support.

* * *

Bahrain's Prime Minister Khalifa resigned and was reappointed in a matter of a few hours yesterday, in an apparent ploy by Khalifa and Emir Isa, the country's ruler, to rid themselves of the National Assembly.

The two-year-old assembly has taken its responsibilities seriously and has been a constant thorn in the side of Bahrain's ruling family. The regime has also arrested some 30 leftist leaders.

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